

# Hit The Beach!

## The Southern California ASL Club Newsletter



April 2004 Volume 9 Number 1

### The President's Corner

by Jim Aikens

First, I want to thank the membership for electing to extend my sentence...er...term as President for another year. I'm pleased to say that all of our Officers; Matt Cicero, Paul Simonsen, Matt Romey, Rob Feinstein, Scott Thompson and Dave Rosner, will be returning as well. I can't emphasize enough how important it is for the ongoing success of our Club to have these guys as our leadership team. Year in, and year out, they do the hard work that makes our Club the model and envy of every ASL Club in the world. When you see them, take a moment to thank them for all their hard work. They deserve it.

I'm happy to announce that West Coast Melee VII was another Club success. This year we changed both venue and format, and I'm pleased to say that both were well received and, I believe, a significant improvement over previous years. Attendance was equal to last year, and in an era when most tournaments' attendance have been dropping steadily each year, that is good news indeed. I received many compliments, and not a single complaint, with regard to our new format, which successfully combined unstructured open play in the first few rounds with hard-core single-elimination competition in the later rounds. As to our new location, I received nothing but rave reviews. In our old location, Embassy suites, I generally fielded 3-5 complaints per day from members suffering from everything from screwed up reservations to rude service. I'm happy to report this year at Crowne I received not \*one single complaint\* during our entire 4 day stay. Additionally, I found Crowne's staff and management extremely easy to work with. You can bet we'll be back next year.

Our spring event was held in May at Bryan Earl's house in Monrovia, our second annual "Cinco de Gringo" ASL Tournament and Mexican Barbeque. The weather was perfect and the food was even better, thanks to Matt Cicero's firm hand at the grill. Congratulations to Chuck Hammond for winning the event plaque.



Playtest work continues on Melee Pack II which is close...oh so close, to completion. Once we have finished the last two scenarios, the pack will go to paste-up, proofing and printing. You can expect it to be released in the very near future.

I hope everyone enjoys their summer.

**President@socalasl.com**

### Marching Orders

by Matt Cicero

August is here and so I figured it was about time to polish off this issue of *HTB!* Yes I am five months late and yes I realize that Volume 9 Number 2 was supposed to be out sometime in June. I figure I'll just have to make up for it by compressing my publishing schedule a bit over the next few months. (The plea for submissions will be forthcoming...hang in there...) Given the timeframe, some of this issue is a bit, well, dated....moldy, one might even say. I thought about dumping the content that seemed out of sorts but then I realized that not everyone is feverishly searching the SoCal website for the latest issue of this newsletter...ahem.

The Big Article this issue is my compilation of tanker tactics, "Saddle Up!". I've tried to pull together a dozen or so tips for budding Tank Jockeys based on terrible beatings administered to me by Bad Men. Ok, so I asked a lot of folks some questions and here is what they said. Also in this issue is a look at the Americal Division, the German Tiger I tank and Otto Carius' book, Tigers in the Mud.

Eric Johnson is in the hot seat this time as our *Roll Call!* interviewee while our fearless leader, Jim, has laid out his plan for handling our Club playtest efforts in the future. The brothers (Naked Commissars?) Reinking provide a fun anecdote for our *SWEET!...OUCH!* column.

Finally, I set aside some space to mention Scott Thompson's terrific creation...Wednesday Night ASL. Way to go, Scott! THAT's what SoCal ASL is all about! You'll see what I mean when you get to that article.

Given my ambitious publishing schedule for the rest of 2004, I REALLY hope you'll consider throwing me an article or two in the very near future. They don't take a lot of time and folks really enjoy reading a different "voice" every

now and then.

I know I ask for submissions all the time but truly *HTB!* needs an infusion or two...the delayed publishing schedule being the largest indication of that! I am especially fond of scenario AARs, tactical tips and book reviews. If you can spare a few minutes for a submission I'll be there to make 'em look purty in the newsletter. Thanks!



**Editor@socalasl.com**

# West Coast Melee VII After Action Report

by Jim Aikens

First, the results:

## The Melee:

Champion: Herman Frettlöhr

2nd Place: Gary Trezza

3rd Place: (Tie) David Goldman/Brian Abela

Winner-Rolling Hot Mini: Chad Cummins

Winner-City Fight Mini: David Reinking

Winner-Comra in Arms Mini: Matt Cicero

Challenge Cup Gonzo Award: Fred Timm

Challenge Cup Finesse Award: Matt Cicero

Congratulations to all our winners!

We had 48 in attendance, a slight increase over last year. We had 3 beginner players go through our "7-0 Leaders" program on Friday and Saturday, and had 3 additional new players who dropped in over the weekend to check out the event and our Club. And some say the hobby is dying...I think not.

By all accounts, our decision to change the venue to Crowne Plaza Irvine was a good one, as I mentioned in my President's Corner. A telling anecdote...the Crowne was having their air conditioning units replaced while we were there, resulting in a half day of moderately warm temperatures in our rooms. Before we could call to complain, we had the hotel manager and the head of event planning at our front desk apologizing for the inconvenience. What a change from Embassy where I remember a half a dozen "bug hunts" each year to find someone who could handle an issue or make up for a broken promise. Hell, Crowne was even resupplying our water stations at 10:00 pm. Good food, great rooms, easy cheap parking and LOTS of space (we had a 6' table for every pairing this year!).

Our new Melee format was very well received. It played smoothly and we were able to keep the "waiting around" to a minimum. We also tried a staggered start on the Minis which seemed to work very well. As folks showed up late or fell out of the three-round Minis, they had an option to join our two-round Mini which began Saturday afternoon. Don Petros' Campaign Game had its own area in the main room and folks drifted by throughout the weekend to see how the German assault

was progressing. Don's map was incredible and the howling at that table was a good indicator of the fun for the players. All our events went off as planned: Recon Thursday, The Hero Game, the Minis, the Team Campaign Game, the 7-0 Leaders and of course "The Melee" itself.

I believe we set a record for the shortest ever Club meeting on Friday morning; around 2.5 minutes. :) President re-elected, officers willing to continue, unanimous consent...done!

I say this every year, and I'm going to say it again because I can't say it enough; this couldn't come together unless a whole lot of people did a whole lot of things. At the very top of that list is the indispensable support of Paul Simonsen and Matt Cicero. Paul tracked all the results virtually up-to-the-minute, allowing us to pair the players about as quickly as they became available. Matt did the Recon Thursday drinks and covered for me that afternoon when I went to class, printed all the materials, organized the 'Rolling Hot Mini', dispensed the tee shirts, handled the money, and sold Melee Packs. Both of these guys were right there when I needed them all weekend. It is truly a pleasure to team up with two guys like them.

I also want to thank Eric Morton and Dave Rosner for organizing the other two minis, Dave Nicholas for handling the plaques, Robert Feinstein for designing and procuring the tee shirts, Don Petros for running the Campaign Game event, and Sheldon Ryland for running the Hero Game. Dave Nicholas also did his usual yeoman duty running the 7-0 Leaders program. How cool is it when a completely new player walks into WCM for the first time, steps up the T.D.'s desk to register and gets put into a specially organized program for newbies? Happened 3 times this weekend.

I also want to extend my thanks to everyone who came and played. This thing is a lot of work and it's only worth it if people show up. Lastly, on a personal note, I want to say it was a pleasure to see all of my friends this weekend and get a chance to socialize.

## CINCO DE GRINGO After Eating Report

**Beer! Not just 'beer'....BEER! We're talking' imported nectars from afar! Back that up with the thinnest slices of beef, marinated in exotic spices and grilled lovingly over a pure flame. Heap on an order of some of the biggest, crispiest, tender chicken wings your mama never made. Add in Romey Rice and all the fixins and you have one hellacious BBQ Bash. Heap on a lazy day of ASL and I'd have to call this year's spring One-Day a huge success!**

**Bryan Earll hosted the Club again for our second annual Cinco de Gringo ASL party. Final tally was 18 folks including our newest member, Karl Von Voigt who not only decided to join the Club on the spot but walked away with a copy of the Starter Pack and Melee Pack I. Ya gotta love that kind of dedication and support! Since Sean G. decided a baseball game was more important than ASL, it was up to Dave Nicholas to close the place down after whipping Bryan Earll in *The Attu Cimb SP100* by candlelight around 11 PM.**

**We had 18 Clubbers show up for the great eats, drinks and ASL. The theme for the day was "rarely used rules" and the tournament was our tried and true two-round format. Starter Packs were in use during the day and seemed well-received. The Club still has a few extras if folks want to purchase one.**

**Play was fast and furious. We had 14 games played despite 4 folks having to leave early. Only one PT but it was a very good effort at "Worthy".**

**When the food had been devoured, the beer guzzled and the dust settled, Chuck Hammond emerged victorious, claimed his plaque and was crowned the Dog of War Champ. Congratulations Chuck! You are one tough hombre! Now if we can just teach him to stop vomiting his counters all over the friggin' table while he plays....**

**A big thanks to Bryan for the use of his home. Thanks to Matt R. for his Romey Rice, and thanks to all of you who made it to play. Finally, a special thanks to Paul Simonsen for getting out to play with us one last time before he disappeared to Oregon! Looking forward to seeing you at WCM, Paul!**

# ***Roll Call! ...Eric Johnson !***

**HTB!:** *Where are you from? Any military experience?*

**EJ:** Southern California, more or less. Nope.

**HTB!:** *What got you started with ASL? When?*

**EJ:** Much to my distress, back in 1981 the D&D groupies I spent way too much of my time with started playing this new game called Squad Leader...How was my paladin ever going to make it to 5th level if we didn't stay focused?

**HTB!:** *How did you learn the game?*

**EJ:** Raced though all 40 of the original modules in one summer with a friend of mine. Attended some of the original Game Tournaments in L.A, where the Squad Leader players all fit in one small room.

**HTB!:** *Why do you like ASL over other leisure activities?*

**EJ:** It is very social, a "gentleman's" game. In another era we would have drunk cognac and smoked cigars as we played.

**HTB!:** *How do you like to play ASL? FtF, Tourneys, VASL...*

**EJ:** Mostly VASL now, with some Tournaments.

**HTB!:** *Do you like to play Fast? Slow? Medium?*

**EJ:** Medium.

**HTB!:** *How often do you get to play?*

**EJ:** I usually have one VASL game going at any given time.

**HTB!:** *Let's talk about some of your favorites in ASL...*

***Favorite vehicle?***

**EJ:** PzIVH. All around good tank, but not so valuable that you get freaked about using it aggressively.

***Favorite nationality?***

**EJ:** Has anyone picked the French yet?

***Favorite troop type?***

**EJ:** Heroes.

***Favorite theater of war?***

**EJ:** Western Europe.

***Favorite tactical situation? Why?***

**EJ:** When your defense is just barely hanging on....brings out the best in a player.

***Favorite scenarios? Ok, list your Dogs, too...***

**EJ:** No favorite, but I lean towards larger scenarios with lots of toys. I don't like them if they are too small, such as when

a side has a single critical AT gun.

***Favorite product produced to date? Why?***

**EJ:** The new rulebook.

**HTB!:** *What do you think about DYO? Ever tried it?*

**EJ:** Tried it once or twice. Not convinced it produces good scenarios.

**HTB!:** *CG versus one-shot games...any preference?*

**EJ:** Have not played too many CGs yet, but I might play ABtF with my Italian VASL opponent. Could be the longest ASL game ever.

**HTB!:** *Best ASL experience...*

**EJ:** Probably had to be when Rob Feinstein and I managed to play a desert scenario in a tent in Baja one afternoon, when it was blazing hot and the wind was howling. Very appropriate. We had dust on the boards and counters.

**HTB!:** *Worst ASL experience...*

**EJ:** When someone was discovered to be cheating during tournament play against me. This was a very long time ago, and that person has not been heard from for awhile. This goes against the whole "Gentleman" concept I referred to earlier.

**HTB!:** *What Would You Like To Try Next?*

**EJ:** Let's see...I have played ASL on a boat, plane and in a car, so that leaves a train.

**HTB!:** *How could the game be better?*

**EJ:** I would like to see VASL continue to evolve. ON LINE RULEBOOK!! Hello MMP, R U Reading this? I have already sent Rodney \$\$, and I AM WILLING TO SUBSCRIBE TO THIS PRODUCT!

**HTB!:** *Top 3 things You'd Recommend For Playing ASL?*

**EJ:**

1. Understand and be aware of the victory conditions.
2. Plan on winning on the last turn.
3. Plan ahead your rout paths and rally locations.

**HTB!:** *Any Final Comments?*

**EJ:** Roll low.



**Thanks Eric!**





# Saddle Up! Tips from the Tank Jockeys

by Matt Cicero

There is a breed of ASLer that I will dub "Tank Jockeys". These are the guys who always have enough MP to get where they are going. They are the ones who always shoot your tanks when they are most vulnerable while never giving you a good shot at theirs. These are the guys who seem to have total recall of every vehicle note, special rule or interesting tactic for each vehicle in the game...theirs and yours!

I've had the opportunity to talk to a few of these guys in recent months and in doing so, I've managed to gather up a few of their favorite tricks and pointers. The 14 tips that follow include some ideas that are well-known, some that are known but seldomly remembered in time and a few that most of us haven't ever tried before. I hope they help your game as much as they have helped mine.

## 1) Know your stats.

You've heard it said often enough...read your Vehicle and Ordnance Notes. But do you also read the Notes on your opponent's vehicles? Do you look up and write down the To Kill numbers and Special Ammo Depletion numbers for all the vehicles, guns and SW in a scenario? You are on track if you know your own AFV's stats. You are way ahead if you know the stats for all weapons in the scenario and can access that info quickly during play!

## 2) Anticipate your opponent.

Let's assume you've gone over the stats for your vehicles and for your opponent's anti-tank assets. Now consider that info and try to predict just how your opponent will use his assets to destroy your vehicles. If your Frontal Armor is impenetrable by his weapons, he may try flank shots or Deliberate Immobilization shots. If he has Panzerfausts, remember their maximum range. If he has Daisy Chains, be wary along roads. By knowing your capabilities, and your opponent's, you will better be able to predict how he will set up and how he will use his forces against you.

## 3) Remember...it's a tank, not a gun on wheels.

Sometimes it seems the best thing to do with a tank is find a nice spot, park and blast away with your MA for 5 turns. And yes, this can often be a very effective use of the vehicle. However, keep in mind that tanks, in addition to having a Big Gun, offer a huge number of tactical choices unavailable to other units. VBM Freeze, Bounding First Fire, Overruns, Smoke Grenades/Dischargers and Movement through opponent-occupied hexes are some of the many other abilities of tanks. A working MA is valuable, but sometimes, a tank can be just as deadly even if its MA is malf'd. And when you realize that truth, suddenly you may be thinking twice about those MA repair rolls.

## 4) Put your best foot forward.

Tanks usually have strong frontal armor and somewhat

weaker side/rear armor. Always think about where your turret (TCA) and your hull (VCA) should be pointing. While moving, you can swing your turret freely...so why not have it cover possible HIP gun locations or potential LOS to on-board threats. It may be tedious, but I've seen a lot of tanks live to fight on because they swiveled their turrets while they moved...and watched as an opponent's shell bounced off the turret frontal armor rather than smash through the paper-thin rear Hull armor. When you come to a stop, make sure you are facing the direction most likely to benefit you...because opponents are likely to move through your TCA or because hidden guns may appear or even because you think it will provide some valuable Interdiction against routing opponent units. Even more important is the facing for your VCA. Snuggling your Rear armor up against a wall is far more useful than giving your heavy frontal armor Hull Down protection. Pointing your nose in the direction you intend to move next saves MP. And although it may be small in FP, a BMG can nonetheless cause problems to someone trying to skip across some Open Ground while your turret is facing down a larger threat in the other direction.

## 5) Twist and Shoot

Lets say that despite your best efforts to "put your best foot forward" you still never seem to have your TCA or your VCA facing the right direction. Opponents always seem to maneuver around to your flank to try a nice Bounding First Fire shot. Ok, happens to the best of us. So beat him at his own game...why not turn your turret by firing your CMG at the attacking tank? Sure, obvious...but then, I see a lot of folks who would rather expose their turret to the BFF shot than waste the CMG. Depending on how the opponent maneuvers, you might find yourself facing a pretty good BFF shot. The trick is to take your MG shot just before you think the opponent will fire. Don't worry about your MA since you will still pay the Case A penalty for the turret swing no matter when you finally fire the MA. Meanwhile, you have your best armor facing your opponent. In fact, if you don't mind the penalty (or if you have your butt hanging out in the wind), you could turn your whole vehicle to face your opponent by firing your BMG. The downside to all this? You won't be able to use Smoke or Motion Attempts once you fire. Such is life.

## 6) BU/CE

Knowing when to Button Up or go Crew Exposed is an art form. In the simplest analysis, stay BU to avoid opponent Small Arms fire, go CE if you need to hustle along a road. Tank Jockeys seem to get much more out of their vehicles, however. They ride CE and trust in the +2 TEM so they can avoid the BU To Hit modifier. They use CE to move along a road rapidly, fire Smoke Dischargers, use Bounding First Fire then BU in the Advance Phase to

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avoid unhappiness during their opponent's turn. The trick is to plan ahead and to take advantage of opportunities without being completely reckless. And that is where the art comes in. My view of CE status is based on the role my tanks are playing. I will go CE if the tanks are there to support the infantry. That is, I'll let my opponent shoot at my tanks rather than my infantry so that my doughboys can survive a little easier. If they don't shoot the tanks, then I'll use the extra movement and the more accurate To Hit shots to cause him grief anyway. If the tanks are the critical piece in the scenario, I'll be less brave and stay buttoned. At long range, the only reason to BU is to avoid a tank-Recall from an active sniper.

### 7) Delay and Overspending

Delay MP are spent when you are stopped. "Overspending" is the fine tactic of paying more MP to enter a hex than you normally need to. These two concepts are very important because they allow you to control how many MP you expend in the sights of an opponent. Case J, J1 and J2 To Hit Modifiers are based on MP expended in sight and there is a world of difference when a Gun takes a shot at a tank using Case J2 (+4) and Case J (+2). Control of your MP expenditures also allows you to control Vehicle Dust (F11.74) and mitigate Hammada Immobilization (D3.31). Used judiciously, Delay and Overspending can also allow you to take advantage of Bounding Fire ROF by having just enough MP available to line up and take that second, unexpected shot.

### 8) Pop Goes the Weasel

So your opponent has moved up a nasty little nut of concealed guys at Ground Level to slow down your assault. Rather than slug it out with your infantry, you call in the armor. Move a tank into the concealed guys' hex using VBM after first overspending outside of the hex, fire Smoke Dischargers, take a Bounding First Fire/MG shot at him and then stay in Motion. This will give him 2 MP to react to if you do it right. He may choose to use Reaction Fire against you and lose his concealment. He may also choose to stay concealed. Either way, he is Frozen...VBM Frozen, that is. He can't shoot out of his hex since you are in it (A7.212). What's more, at the end of your MP, his units lose their concealment anyway thanks to the presence of your tank (A12.42). If you have taken advantage of this maneuver to move up your infantry (or to Opportunity Fire them), you may have a very lovely AFPh in which his formerly concealed nut is ruined. Just remember to avoid jumping into CC unless you have very favorable odds...that tank of yours will let him roll first!

### 9) Clear Lines of Sight

I used to love setting up vehicles and guns so that I always got the drop on an opponent moving into view. And then I started realizing that I never hit anything thanks to that J2 modifier of +4. The trick, I learned, is to force your

opponent to move 4 MP in your LOS and thus reduce your To Hit mods from J2 to J (+2). So I stopped setting up behind buildings and I stopped lining up shots against 1-hex gaps between woods hexes. Instead, I started covering places where I'd see him use 3+ MP. Open spaces he must cross, hexsides likely to be used by VBM and elevation changes he must climb became ideal areas to cover. Also valuable were the longer shots available along city streets that were so restrictive to movement once you started down a given road.

Of course, if you are doing the moving, try your best to avoid giving an opponent a clear shot. Slip behind cover while you move. Also, "overspend" in a hex you believe to be out of LOS in order to minimize MP expenditures in LOS. A lot of times, folks move into view with 3-4 MP left, then stop and Delay the last few MP out...this can show an opponent just enough MP to pop you. If you overspend MP then step out and stop, you let him see you for only 2 MP. In general, Clear Lines of Sight require you to sit back a bit further from those areas you wish to cover most effectively.

### 10) Bore Sighting

One neat trick I learned about Bore Sighting is the fact that you don't have to pick a hex that is in your TCA to begin with...just one that is in your LOS and normal range...since changing your TCA won't negate your Bore Sight Location (C6.43). This can be handy in covering multiple hot spots. If you know you will need to turn your turret to cover two areas, why not pick a likely Location for the opponent to move through and Bore Sight it. Then place your TCA to cover the other area. That way, you can offset your Case A TH modifier for turning your turret to fire at your Bore Sighted Location. It's like having eyes in the back of your head...just so long as your opponent obliges you and steps in the right Location. Obviously this is best used on choke points. This tactic is also effective in dense terrain where long LOS do not exist and Case J1 and Case J2 modifiers are likely to be commonplace.

### 11) The "B" Team

You sit down to a scenario that includes a towed Gun as part of your reinforcements. Often the towing HT, Carrier, etc. drops off the Gun, then moves off to support your forces elsewhere. Consider this...keep the vehicle near the Gun. Yes, repositioning the Gun may be valuable, but that's not what I mean. If the towing vehicle, say a half-track, has a crew, it just might be worth its weight in gold serving as a backup to the Gun's crew. In fact, you could Abandon the halftrack and Remove any eligible MGs and set up a little fire support for your Gun crew. No weapons to Remove? No problem. You can swap the crews and allow the Gun crew to provide some covering fire with its 2 FP while the vehicle crew mans the Gun. Sure, you may not see the advantage of tying down a mobile unit in this fashion in every scenario. But when the Gun is critical to

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your survival, it just might pay off to have the "B" Team ready to keep it firing.

### 12) Shotguns vs. Sniper Rifles

The Area Target Type just might save your life! Sure it fires at halved FP. Sure it uses up ROF for non-mortars. Sure the opponent's TEM adds to the effects DR on the IFT. Sure it grows those immovable 5/8" Acquisition counters. (Man this sucks!) For the fun of it, lets consider what a T34 M43 might do firing ATT. ATT at a range of 13-18 is a Base 8 To Hit. Add in an L-type Gun and you have a Base 9. If your opponent has taken up residence in a Trench, there are no hindrances and your tank can go CE, 9 is the Final TH. The same T34 firing Infantry Target Type at the same target yields a Base 5 (hate those Red Numbers!) with modifiers of +1 (L-Gun) and -2 (Trench) for a 4 To Hit. Black Number vehicles would have a 5 To Hit at 13-18 hexes. When the IFT is consulted, your T34's 76L Gun uses the 6-Column (+2 for TEM) for ATT and the 12-Column for ITT. Summing this up, we have a 76L firing HE at 13-18 hexes. ATT: 9 TH, 6+2 IFT; ITT: 4 TH; 12+0 IFT.

ATT is particularly valuable for those AFVs which sport a high caliber (80+mm is nice, 120+mm is sweet) L-type Gun with no ROF and which uses the Red To Hit numbers (can you say Russians?). ATT allows you to strike hard at extreme ranges and therefore may be very valuable in desert and steppe terrain. ATT also allows you to reduce immobile fortifications since defenders can't avoid the acquisition by leaving their hex. Finally, ATT is nice when the defenders have a low morale, since ANY morale check becomes scary for such units. In the end, you can even convert fire from ATT to ITT or perhaps use SMOKE, especially at middle ranges, once you generate a little acquisition.

### 13) Wall Crawling

City fighting was always tricky for me since I often found my tanks wandering into the LOS of opponent tanks and Guns as I moved along the streets, vying for position. The trick I learned that really helped open up my game on dense city boards was the use of bypass. Take a look at how a little bypass maneuvering can let you get the drop on your opponent.

Your opponent has a T34 M43 parked in hex R2 (See Diagram A) with his TCA is facing two likely avenues of approach. He has good LOS and enough room to defend against your charging tanks. You can approach him from any direction but let's assume his rear is guarded somehow, so you'll have to go right at him...just what he wants! Why not try a little wall crawling and get the drop on your opponent? Move your tank into bypass along the edge of his TCA and stop. In our example, a PzIV slides up through hex Q7 and then moves into bypass on the Q6-R6 hexside and stops. Note that the special CA of Bypass

vehicles now places your buddy's tank squarely in your CA while you are outside of his...even a NT turret tank can do this! In order for him to shoot you, he needs to swing his turret. Lets run the numbers. We'll assume city fighting keeps everyone BU. The T34 must turn his ST turret to fire and has seen the German for only 3 MP. His TH number will be: Base 10; +2 Case A, +1 Case I, +3 Case J1. The T34 hits on a 4. You, meanwhile, have the following TH on your Bounding First Fire shot: Base 10; +2 Case B, +3 Case C1, +1 Case I. You hit on a 4 as well. Big deal, you say! You have an equal chance of hitting each other. True. But had you moved directly into his sights, say from hex Q7 to R6 to R5 and stopped, his To Hit would have been as follows: Base 10; +1 Case I, +3 Case J1. He would hit on a 6 versus your 4 To Hit and that's a heck of a lot better shot for him.

Where this tactic really shines is in city fighting or scattered forest terrain where you have more than one vehicle that can afford to attack using wall crawling, especially against ST or (joy!) NT turret vehicles. Picture our PzIV attacking as described above. Now picture another PzIV attacking in the same manner from Bypass along hexside R5-S5. With the T34's TCA facing the wrong way (having shot at the first PzIV), the second Pz IV is that much safer from a second shot, even if the Russian retained ROF. The peculiar CA of a bypassing vehicle gives you a sneaky way to see around corners.

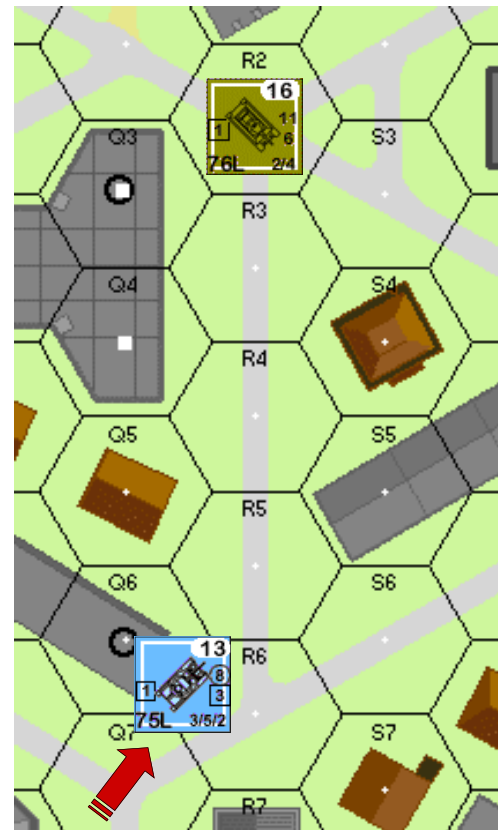


Diagram A: Wall Crawling

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#### 14) Drive-By Shootings

After many a painful experience I can now describe two different ways to conduct a Drive-By Shooting with your AFVs. The first type is the employment of the Vehicle Overrun. Sure, you can't overrun an AFV...but you can overrun its vulnerable PRC! If you have one of those MG-heavy early-war tanks, you may find it a dandy way to wipe out your opponent's armor, provided you can maneuver up and over him on the fly. The downside is that if he kicks into Motion, you will have an additional +2 on your overrun attack (in addition to CE, if applicable) (D7.12). Still 16+4 or 20+4 ain't too shabby!

Then there is the second type of Drive-By, often used when your opponent is not so gracious as to remain CE for you to overrun him. Run through his hex and shoot him in the ass!

Let's assume he is good and manages to keep his VCA and TCA in your rough direction, like our PzIVJ in hex R6 of Diagram B. Let's also assume you make your approach skillfully but must break cover at 3 hexes distance from him, like our T34 M43 in hex R3 (having just moved from hex S3). The PzIV lines up his shot, having seen the T34 for 1 MP, and it looks like he'll need a 5 To Hit (Base 10; +1 BU, +4 Motion-J2). When the T34 moves to R4, the TH is the same thanks to Case J2. Expending his 3<sup>rd</sup> MP, the T34 moves to R5 and the TH for the PzIV improves to 6 (Base 10; +1 BU, +3 Case J1). Looks pretty good! But wait! What if the Russian wants to stop on his next MP? He'll get the -2 DRM for Point Blank shooting (Case L). But the PzIV would shoot first! That would be a 9 TH (Base 10: +1 BU, +2 Motion-J, -2 Case L). The PzIV has an interesting choice. However, unless he manages to shoot and kill/shock/immobilize the T34 in R5, the T34 should be able to finish his Drive By.

Rather than stop on its next MP, the T34 moves into R6 with the PzIV. The PzIV's TH drops to 5 (Base 10: +2 In-Hex, +1 BU, +2 Motion-J). Even if the T34 stops, the TH is the same since there is no Point Blank modifier in the same hex. The PzIV may decide to shoot you in his own hex for fear that you intend to "freeze" him by remaining in his hex. Whether your opponent fires as you approach or is fooled into waiting till you are in his hex, you've accomplished your goal...goadng him to fire rather than use a Motion Attempt or Smoke Discharger.

Your next MP carries you out of his hex into Q7 where you then stop with your turret swiveling to face the PzIV's Rear. If the PzIV can still shoot, he may swing his turret to fire at you. If it is his first shot, he has a 6 TH (Base 10; +3 Turning ST Turret, +1 BU, +2 Motion, -2 Point Blank). More than likely, he will have to use Intensive Fire, making his TH a 5 (Base 10; +3 Turning ST Turret, +2 IF, +1 BU, +2 Motion, -2 Point Blank, -1 Acquisition). The good news

here is that you will likely win a Gun Duel if the PzIV needs to use IF to shoot you and that can really help out on your To Kill rolls (facing his Rear Armor on Hull and Turret). You'll have to judge your time to shoot based on his available shots. Perhaps shooting the PzIV in the Rear is best done on the fly, without stopping. The ideal situation would be to entice him to use up all possible shots during your approach or in his hex. You can then safely stop behind him, once you leave his hex, in order to take the Point Blank shot...(Base 10; +2 Case B, +2 Case C, +1 BU, -2 Point Blank) with a 7 TH. Nice for you. Bad for the PzIV.

Using either Drive-By can yield great benefits. CE vehicles can be very vulnerable to Overruns and NT tanks are rather vulnerable to being shot in the rear. One last thing to consider for either style...if you have enough MP, make sure you make it back into cover to avoid the payback in your opponent's next PFPH should your brilliant assault flub terribly.

Tanks are powerful weapons in ASL. Tank Jockeys make them just plain scary. Of course, no matter how good one gets, even a Tank Jockey can fall victim to the incredible, the improbable and the unbelievable. But that's ASL!

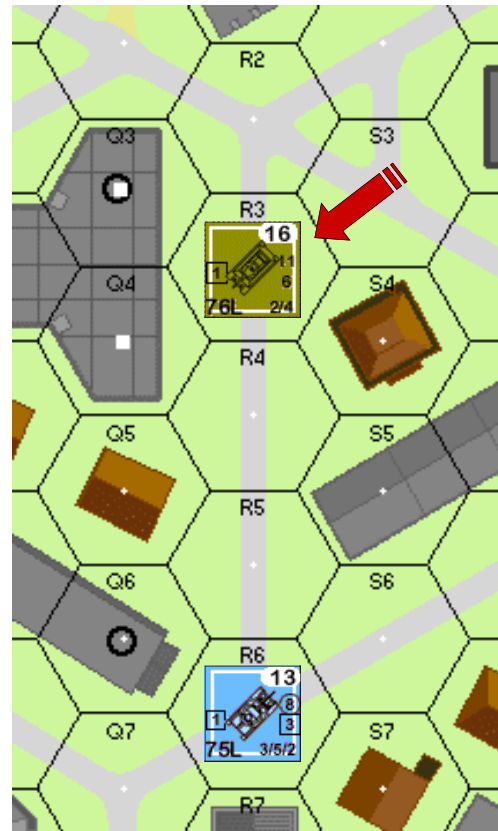


Diagram B: Drive-By Shootings



# THE ROCK REPORT

by Matt Cicero



*The Rock: Pick a player in your gaming group and declare that he has the Rock. The first person to beat that person in an ASL game wins the Rock. The only restriction on Rock transfers is that you cannot immediately win the Rock back from the guy who just won it from you.*

*When last we discussed the SoCal Rock, Fred Timm had overcome Chuck Hammond to claim the Rock. But would he keep the Sacred Stone...or lose it to the next challenger to come along? -ed.*

**Game 5 (Fred Timm vs. Bryan Earll):** *Very little is known about this contest. Apparently, Bryan led a midday assault on Fred Timm at an undisclosed location in Southern California sometime in March of 2004. Vague reports of howling, rending of clothes and vile mistreatment of counters have been reported. All that is certain, is that a game of J84 Makin Taken was played and the Rock was wrenched from Fred's grasp. -ed.*

**The Challenge:** As his last act of heroics, before moving to TN, Chuck has decided to attack as the Kiwi's in Deluxe ASL "B", The Kiwis Attack. Since this is kind of a swan song to a long time gamer in SoCal, I will attempt to offer every sweet moment for inspection. All buildings are stone. Only building Hexes with stairwells have a Level 1 location. At the end of placement there were NO level one locations on the board. Wooden Rubble shows Chuck's placement and Stone Rubble is Bryan's placement. Four shell holes each were placed by both of us. The German Player has the play balance, 25 VC (excluding prisoners) must exit off of the "South" edge. 24 British Elite Squads, 4 tanks, and toys are attacking 12 548's with Toys. Shell holes cost double to move through, weather is overcast.

Well, that's the Rock; life is hard. -Bryan

*Bryan had accompanied his note with a VASL map showing the initial terrain changes. -ed.*

**Game 6 (Bryan Earll vs. Chuck Hammond):** Well, I dined Bryan Earll yesterday in The Kiwis Attack, so the Rock belongeth to me. -Chuck

**The Offer:** There is a chance I may play Casta before I leave. If I do, he is free to challenge me for the Rock - I wouldn't suggest it though. He is planning to take the Americans (albeit with the balance) in The Mad Minute, which, if memory serves, is pretty pro-SS.

Any challenges are welcome. :- ) -Chuck

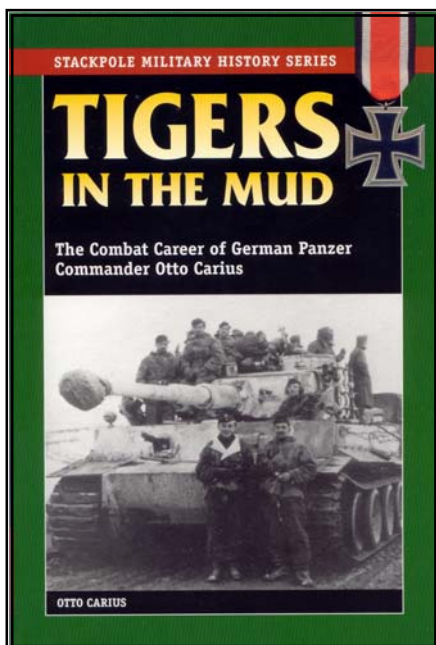
**Game 7 (Chuck Hammond vs. Chris Castellana):** In a set back for democracy, the gallant American paratroopers at Longchamps were crushed in ASL24 The Mad Minute by Nazi stormtroopers. As a result, the So-Cal Rock moves to Tennessee. Oh, the humanity! :- ) Seriously, Chuck's precision attack ended it on turn four. Congratulations on a successful defense of the Rock title.

Being ever so stubborn (thick?), I still think the Americans have a better chance to win than reflected in the ROAR statistics. Back to the defense drawing board. -Casta

*And so the history of the Rock grows. We have seen it pass through many hands here in SoCal. Sean Geraghty claimed it first then beat Scott Thompson to retain it. David Myers broke Sean's hold on the Rock only to lose it to Chuck Hammond. Chuck's claim was short-lived as Fred Timm proved triumphant. Bryan Earll rose up to cast down the mighty Timm only to fall victim to the dice of Chuck Hammond. A last desperate grab for the Rock was made by Casta, only to see it slip through his fingers and board a plane for TN. Who will rise up and challenge Chuck? Who will discipline him in the ways of ASL and once more restore the Rock to its rightful place in SoCal? Chuck lurks the VASL server most nights...waiting for someone to cast down their glove...*



# Book Review: Tigers In The Mud by Matt Cicero



ISBN: 0-8117-2911-7

I like to read, if you haven't guessed by now. Since WWII is one of my favorite topics, I tend to look for interesting subjects set in that era. If I'm lucky, I find a book that really pulls me into the action while still providing enough detail for me to start sketching out ASL scenarios.

When I first scanned through Tigers in the Mud on the internet, I was intrigued. Here is the story of Oberleutnant der Reserve Otto Carius, winner of the Knights Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, bearer of the Wound Badge in Gold for being wounded 5 times and awarded the Third Level of the Panzer Assault Badge in Silver for 50 assaults. The story covers Carius' military career from start to finish but seems to dwell particularly on the events in 1944 on the Eastern Front as part of 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the 502<sup>nd</sup> Heavy Panzer Battalion. The text reads like a very detailed accounting of the many battles in which Carius participated, mixed with a good helping of personal experiences and humor to make the narrative entertaining. And yes, you learn a lot about Tigers.

I read the book straight through and found the reading interesting. Carius spent a great deal of time describing his missions, the men and officers with whom he fought, his equipment, his vehicles, his tactical reasoning, his regard for his enemy and his concerns about the strategic decision-making during the war. Carius comes across as a man who seized upon opportunity when possible, who learned hard lessons well and who conducted himself as a consummate professional.

Carius began his career...and his book, as a young, rather undersized East Prussian recruit, scion of a long family of military careerists. His first assignment was in Posen, where he had been drafted into the 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Replacement Battalion despite his efforts to volunteer for a tank destroyer unit. In early 1940, when France was feeling the first assaults of the German war machine, Carius was busy learning how to be a soldier. Not long after, an opportunity arose to join the Panzer corps...volunteers were needed and Carius accepted, despite his father's strict admonishment to never join the tank corps. Carius was transferred to the 7<sup>th</sup> Panzer Replacement Battalion in Vaihingen where he soon became a loader in a Czech-built Panzer 38t sporting its mighty 37mm cannon. Carius trained throughout most of 1940, his tank joining others to form the 21<sup>st</sup> Panzer Regiment at Vaihingen in October which later became part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division at Ohrdruf. Finally on June 21, 1941, training ended and the 20<sup>th</sup> Panzer found itself stepping off near Kalwarya, East Prussia as part of Operation Barbarossa.

Carius presents his experiences on the Eastern Front in great detail. He describes his fellow tankers and the many others he encounters along the way, including Heinrich Himmler himself. Carius also relates his impressions of the equipment and vehicles he used and encountered in the service. The weak armor of the Pz 38t. The impressive characteristics of the T-34s and the various 'Stalin' tanks. The high combat power and low strategic reliability of the Tiger, Carius' vehicle of choice. What made this book most interesting, however, were the detailed descriptions of Carius' many engagements as a commander in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Company of the 502<sup>nd</sup> Heavy Panzer Battalion. We understand each operation from a commander's point of view both in the planning room and on the battlefield. Although his descriptions are sparse at times, when taken as a whole, they offer rich material for a number of interesting ASL scenarios. Carius describes defensive operations against a determined Russian assault, breakthrough containments, combined arms offensives, tank battles, armored assaults and just about every other kind of battle you can imagine on the East Front. Stukas play a role, artillery of varying calibers is employed and a variety of infantry are present, from combat engineers with flamethrowers and demo charges to SS troops. The Russians are mostly nameless units, but their actions are well detailed by Carius. What's more, Carius provides a few maps that help detail the major operations and his commentary includes terrific detail on the weather, the ground conditions, the terrain and the major defensive features/obstacles. In July of 1944, Carius is severely wounded while reconnoitering in a motorcycle. Following his convalescence he is transferred to the Western Front where he fights his final battles aboard a Jagdtiger (yeah, the one with the 128mm gun!) in and beyond the famous Ruhr Pocket.

As I was finishing the book, I felt myself wondering about a few details here and there in some of the actions described. Much to my surprise, the appendices contain no less than six after action reports detailing the activities which Carius lived through and described in his narrative. Not only did these reports fill in some interesting gaps in Carius' narrative, they also at times gave more detail about the vehicles, guns and other weapons used in each confrontation...and the losses sustained by each side.

Besides the obvious wealth of information in Otto Carius' book, I found myself contemplating one particular impression above all others. Despite an immense amount of punishment, the Tiger tanks always seemed to weather the storm in battle. It seems to me that the Tiger portrayed in ASL doesn't quite match up to the real thing.



# Vehicle Notes: The Infamous Tiger I

by Matt Cicero

## Panzerkampfwagen VI Ausf E (Sd Kfz 181)

Other Designations: Tiger I, VK4501(H)

Type: Heavy Tank

Manufacturer: Henschel, Wegmann

Production: 1,354 produced from July 1942 to August 1944.

Crew: 5

### Dimensions:

Weight: 57 metric tons

Length: 20 ft 8 ½ in + gun overhang 7 ft ½ in

Width: 12 ft 3 in

Height: 9 ft 4 ¾ in

### Performance:

Ground Clearance: 1 ft 5 in

Traverse: 360 degrees (hydraulic)

Speed: 25 max, 15 mph road, .5-10 mph cross country

Range: 87 miles road, 53 miles cross country

Trench Crossing: 10 ft

Gradient: 30 degrees

Fording: Submersible to 13 ft

### Armament:

One Turret Main Armament 8.8cm KwK36 L/56

One Coaxial Turret 7.92mm MG34

One Hull 7.92mm MG34

### Ammunition:

(KwK36): 92 Pzgr+ (AP Rounds)

(MG34): 4,800 Patr SmK Spgr (MG Rounds)



### Specific Features and Modifications:

- Large horseshoe-shaped turret.
- 8 sets of interleaved Christie-type bogie wheels with torsion bar suspension.
- Hull and superstructure were welded together. Superstructure extended over the tracks to accommodate the size and weight of the wide turret.
- All armor plates were interlocked as well as welded.
- KwK36 was mounted coaxially with an MG34 in the external gun mantlet.
- Originally, design had two machine-pistol ports in the rear of the turret and a cylindrical cupola with vision slits.
- Ammunition load altered over time to include more balanced ratio of AP to HE Rounds for Main Gun.
- In Dec 1942, the right hand pistol port was replaced with an escape hatch.
- In July 1943, the cupola was replaced with a new design that used periscopes
- In May 1943, the engine was upgraded.
- In Jan 1944 new steel-tyred rubber-cushioned road wheels replaced the older dished type.

### Development Notes:

May 26, 1941, the order to design the VK4501(H) was given. Henschel und Sohn, of Kassel, developed the chassis while Krupp developed the turret. Rheinmetall also developed a turret that would hold the 7.5cm KwK L/70 but this never advanced beyond the prototype. The Tiger was developed on familiar German lines, unlike the Panther, only increased in size. At the time it first appeared, the Tiger had the thickest armor of any tank in existence.

### Combat Service:

The first unit to get Tigers was the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon of the 502<sup>nd</sup> Schwere Panzerabteilung. Hurriedly assembled, this unit was rushed to the Leningrad area in August 1942. Tigers were first encountered by the Western Allies in Tunisia in 1943. Tiger I tanks were issued to heavy tank detachments and the heavy tank companies of three SS divisions and to the Grossdeutschland Division. The "Tiger" designation was officially adopted in February 1944. Tigers required very skilled driving and maintenance to get the most out of their performance. Mediocre and insufficiently trained crews were often plagued by mechanical difficulties. This was the tank's chief liability.

# LEGIONS OF WWII: The Americal Division *by Matt Cicero*

## Division Name

Americal Infantry Division

## Division Insignia

Description: Four white stars in the form of the Southern Cross on a blue shield.

## Nationality/ Date Created

American / Task Force 6814 out of New York was reorganized and constituted as the Americal Division on May 24, 1942.

## WWII Deployments

Activated: 27 May 1942 in New Caledonia.

Campaigns: Northern Solomons, Southern Philippines.

## Commanding Officers

Maj. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr. (May-December 1942), Brig. Gen. Edmund B. Seabree (January-May 1943), Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge (May 1943-April 1944), Maj. Gen. Robert McClure (April-October 1944), Maj. Gen. William H. Arnold (November 1944 to inactivation).

## WWII Distinctions/Medals

Distinguished Unit Citations: 2; 1 was a Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) for service on Guadalcanal.

Awards: MH-1; DSC-45; DSM-4; SS-565; LM-78; SM-63; BSM-2,652; AM-79.

## Americal Trivia

- The Americal derived its name from a contraction of the words "America" and "New Caledonia."
- The Americal was the only Army division not designated by a number.
- The Americal was the first United States Army unit to conduct an offensive operation (Guadalcanal, 1942) against the enemy in any theater of WWII.
- The Americal was composed of the 132<sup>nd</sup>, 164<sup>th</sup> and 182<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiments.
- Casualties suffered by the Americal in WWII included 981 Killed in Action and 3,052 Wounded in Action. An additional 176 Americal men died from their wounds.

## A Brief History

The Americal Division had its origin in Task Force 6814 which was formed 14 January 1942 with the mission of

occupying and defending the French colony of New Caledonia, and departed New York on 23 January 1942. The force landed in Australia on 26 February and was sent on to New Caledonia on 6 March 1942, arriving there 12 March 1942 and establishing its headquarters at Noumea. There the force organized the defenses and built installations on New Caledonia and New Hebrides. The Americal Division was organized out of Task Force 6814 units on 27 May 1942.

The 164th Infantry left for Guadalcanal 9 October 1942 and arrived there under air attack on 13 October. The regiment defended Henderson Field against a major Japanese counterattack 24 October, and then went over to the attack from 5 to 11 November, participating in the Battle at Koli Point and Gavaga Creek. The 182nd Infantry arrived on Guadalcanal on 12 November and participated in the renewed offensive toward Kokumbona and Poha River, 18

- 23 November 1942. The division Headquarters and 132nd Infantry landed on Guadalcanal 8 December; the latter attacking Mt. Austen 17 December, and engaged in very heavy combat at the Gifu Strongpoint 24 December 1942 - 9 January 1943, until relieved in line by the 25th Infantry Division. On 16 January 1943 the 182nd participated in the drive along the west coast, and on 1 February the 132nd landed at Verahue and reached Tenaro Village by 9 February. The division then occupied defensive positions and moved to the Fiji Islands in echelon 1 March - 10 April 1943.

There the division reorganized as the HHC of the 51st Infantry Brigade was redesignated the HHC of Americal Division and Task Force 6814 was disbanded 1 May 1943.

The division moved to Bougainville 17 December 1943 - 12 January 1944, the 182nd entering the front line 2 January and the 132nd entering 9 January. A Japanese counterattack on 10 March took the south knob of key Hill 260 from the 182nd and it wasn't recovered until the Japanese abandoned it on 15 March. In April 1944 the division pushed east of the Mavavia River and secured Hill Masses 165, 155, 500, and 501 and extended the outpost line past the Torokina River. The division continued patrolling in the Torokina, Numa Numa, and Laruma sectors until relieved by the Australian 3rd Division on 10 December. From 11 December 1944 - 7 January 1945 the division conducted amphibious training and prepared for movement to the Philippines.

The division moved to the Philippines by echelon 8 - 28 January 1945 where it relieved the 77th Infantry Division

*(Continued on page 12)*





on Leyte Island and established a command post at Capocan 25 January. The division took control of the tactical mission on Leyte northwest of the Jaro-Valencia-Palompon line on 5 February and began pushing toward the west coast of the island. On 19 February the 1st Battalion, 182nd landed on northwest Samar as a provisional task force and cleared the San Bernardino Strait from northwest Samar through Balicutros Islands and west to Capul and Naranjo Islands by 26 February. Meanwhile, the division opened its attack at Villaba on Leyte and completed its encirclement of the Japanese in the northwest coastal sector and mopped up until 10 March 1945.

The 1st Battalion, 132nd landed on Burias and Ticao Islands 3 March 1945, meeting opposition on the former on 6 March and eliminating the Japanese forces there by 10 March. While the 164th continued to mop up in western Leyte under Eighth Army, the rest of the division prepared for operations on Cebu Island. On 10 April the 164th rejoined the division from its mission. The division left Leyte 24 March, and after a one-hour naval bombardment, the division landed at Talisay Cebu and took Cebu City the next day. The 182nd fought the Battle of Go Chan Hill 28 – 29 March 1945 and then battled to clear the other hills, being counterattacked heavily on Bolo Ridge 1 April. The 132nd was counterattacked approaching Hill 27 on 7 April, but took both Hills 20 and 26 by 10 April. The 3rd Battalion, 164th landed on Bohol Island 11 April and destroyed Japanese forces there by 25 April. Meanwhile the division on Cebu fought the Battle of Babay Ridge 12 – 17 April, and then continued combat on the island until 20 June. The 164th landed near Looc on Negros Oriental Island on 26 April and fought the Battle for the Palimpinon Heights until 28 May, the Japanese forces being destroyed on the island near Balasbalas 7 – 12 June 1945.

The division then reassembled on Cebu Island and engaged in training for the invasion of Japan from 21 June until the end of the war. They arrived in Japan on 8 September to participate in the occupation of the Yokohama-Kawasaki-Yokosuka area, returned to Seattle on 9 December, and were inactivated at Fort Lawton Washington on 12 December 1945.

### Medal of Honor Recipients of the Americal Division

#### **Drowley, Jesse R.**

Rank and Organization: Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, Americal Infantry Division.

Place and Date: Bougainville, Solomon Islands, 30 January 1944.

Entered service at: Spokane, Washington.

Birth: St. Charles, Mich.

G.O. No.: 73, 6 September 1944.

#### Citation:

“For gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy at Bougainville, Solomon Islands, 30 January 1944. S/Sgt. Drowley, a squad leader in a platoon whose mission during an attack was to remain under cover while holding the perimeter defense and acting as a reserve for assaulting echelon, saw 3 members of the assault company fall badly wounded. When intense hostile fire prevented aid from reaching the casualties, he fearlessly rushed forward to carry the wounded to cover. After rescuing 2 men, S/Sgt. Drowley discovered an enemy pillbox undetected by assaulting tanks that was inflicting heavy casualties upon the attacking force and was a chief obstacle to the success of the advance. Delegating the rescue of the third man to an assistant, he ran across open terrain to 1 of the tanks. Signaling to the crew, he climbed to the turret, exchanged his weapon for a submachine gun and voluntarily rode the deck of the tank directing it toward the pillbox by tracer fire. The tank, under constant heavy enemy fire, continued to within 20 feet of the pillbox where S/Sgt. Drowley received a severe bullet wound in the chest. Refusing to return for medical treatment, he remained on the tank and continued to direct its progress until the enemy box was definitely located by the crew. At this point he again was wounded by small arms fire, losing his left eye and falling to the ground. He remained alongside the tank until the pillbox had been completely demolished and another directly behind the first destroyed. S/Sgt. Drowley, his voluntary mission successfully accomplished, returned alone for medical treatment.”

### ASL Scenarios Featuring the Americal Division

*HS14 “The Christmas Gifu”:* A Christmas 1942 assault by the 3rd Battalion, 132nd Infantry Regiment meets fierce resistance in the “Gifu” on Guadalcanal. With a dozen interconnected pillboxes, entrenchments and their inherent sneakiness, the Japanese have a formidable defense and will not be easily overcome in this *Operation Watchtower* scenario.

*HS15 “Hill 27”:* The 2nd Battalion of the 132nd was able to seize the heights of Hill 27 situated due east of the “Gifu” on Guadalcanal. Struggling to dig in on the rocky summit, they soon found themselves under counterattack by the warriors of the 124th and 228th Infantry Regiments of Japan. It’s a race to see if the GIs can dig themselves enough protection before the Japanese push them off the hill.

*A little better than last time...I found a whopping **two** scenarios featuring the Americal Division. Of course, you may know of a few more... -ed.*

# Playtesting....The Plan !

by Jim Aikens

As most of you know, we've been working hard to finish the playtesting for Melee Pack II. It is the undisputed consensus of our Club that no scenario will be published before we're sure it's ready to go. If we publish it, and the ROAR record subsequently shows it to favor one side or the other (and 75% of all scenarios do), at least WE know we did everything we could to make that scenario as balanced and as fun to play as possible.

Starting with Melee Pack III, we will introduce a more formalized playtest process that I think will assure that all the scenarios that are submitted get a fair hearing and an equal opportunity to be playtested and included in a Pack. The process I've outlined below is a broad set of guidelines based on the assumption that the playtesting for Melee Pack II will be completed shortly. In fact, that is our priority at this point; to concentrate all of our playtest efforts to put Melee Pack II to bed before starting in on new scenarios. Our current idea is to finish Melee Pack II ASAP and then distribute at ASLOK.

## The Plan

I will form a Scenario Selection Committee. The committee will accept scenario submissions, review the submissions and run preliminary playtests to check for playability, etc. If we have enough previewed and prescreened submissions by the Summer Tournament (usually held in August), the committee will vote (confidentially) on the scenarios submitted (assuming there are at least 6) and select the 6 scenarios they think are the farthest along, most fun, etc. If we do not have enough scenarios or the ones submitted are very "raw", we will delay the selection of the Final 6. In any event, once the Final 6 are selected, we'll announce the 6 scenarios and concentrate on playtesting them exclusively, passing all other submissions into the "hopper" for the next Melee Pack (or back to their designers, if they wish). We will not have a fall tournament (usually held in November). Instead, the fall will be "playtest season", with small, localized playtest days in each region as well as a lot of encouragement for members to kick in individual playtest efforts. In December, the committee will decide if the 6 scenarios are far enough along to be published by WCM 2005. If they are not, we will continue to playtest with a target date of either the May 2005 Cinco de Gringo One Day or, if needed,

ASLOK 2005.

The advantages to the above system should be obvious. We will have an objective, merit-based process where the 6 best scenarios are chosen by committee. By concentrating our playtesting into one season and on 6 specific scenarios, we prevent playtest burnout and do not dissipate our efforts. Finally, this process separates playtesting from the regular Club programs. I do not want the production of scenario packs to become our Club's purpose for existence.

The good news is that we have a number of scenarios ready to be submitted for Melee Pack III, the Selection committee will have its work cut out for it trying to decide among them, and that's a good thing. We have a deep well of talent in the Club, and I expect we'll have no shortage of submissions for quite some time. Let's put Melee Pack II to bed so we can dig in on these new designs already!



## Words That Echo...

"...effectiveness and penetration ability of the 88-mm is more than satisfactory for all targets."

*Hauptman Lange,  
2nd Company, 502nd Heavy Panzer Battalion,  
after action report, January 29, 1943.*

## Did you Know?

### "Wednesday Night ASL!"

by Matt Cicero

Something mysterious happens about the same time each year to a few of us SoCal members. Usually about the time the summer heat starts to press the Los Angeles smog out of the ground and into the air, we happy few find ourselves with a free night to play ASL. Why mysterious? Well, because this glorious night of freedom from wives, children and other worldly responsibilities always seems to end just as quickly as it appears...usually about two months later. The good news, is that our small cabal has been able to gather for some largish scenarios in summers past...like *A Legend is Born*.

This year, Scott Thompson was inspired. No, he didn't have a great scenario or CG in mind. He figured out a far better thing to do with our time. In June, Scott opened up his garage to our newbies. Every Wednesday evening, a combination of new players, rusty players, moderate veterans and grognards gather to push the cardboard. It is a terrific time for everyone. First off, we're playing ASL. Secondly, the newbies get to have fun learning rules and trying new tricks on a regular basis. Finally, when numbers permit, veterans get to polish off a game against a fellow Clubber they may not normally play.

The atmosphere is very laid back. A lot of scenarios folks haven't seen in years are pulled out and dusted off. Rules questions are casually thrown in the air for anyone to answer...though noone actually believes what Scott says... Since the roster of attendees sometimes changes week to week, games are sometimes begun by one person only to be finished by another...or maybe two others! And we even have the June Bug Airforce flying sorties over the tables to keep us company.

Scott has done a great job of setting up this time for us to welcome new players to the Club and to ASL. It is loads of fun and I hope more folks will join us once in a while. If you feel the urge or would just like to come check things out, drop Scott an email or a phone call...he's listed in the Members Section of the Club website.



*Have You Seen This Man?*

## SWEET!...OUCH!

*...Red Barricades is NOT for the faint of heart, especially if you are using Russian equipment...*



"My brother, Larry, has suffered significant ignominy during our Red Barricades CGIV matchup. He is the defending Russians and has had four field phones go X12 in four CG scenarios. In each case, he has gotten one FFE down-thus eliminating the module from use during later CG scenarios. I think this qualifies as an OUCH."

*-Dave Reinking*

*Dave sent this note in to me a long while back...and it was too good to pass up. Thanks, Dave, for being patient. —ed.*



### Upcoming Events...

08/14/04: Dog Days of Summer One-Day  
08/31/04: *Hit The Beach!* V9N2  
11/06/04: Fall One-Day Event

### The Southern California ASL Club

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#### Contributors

Jim Aikens, Chris Castellana, Matt C., Bryan Earll, Chuck Hammond, Eric Johnson, Dave Reinking

#### Credits

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